(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the terminology "Pipeline Protection" in the context of TRIPS, if so, what is meant by the term "Pipeline Protection";

(c) whether the patent term is going to be changed; if so, whether the term is proposed to be 20 years from the date of filing, or 20 years from the date of grant;

(d) whether there is a proposal to protect biotechnology patents involving micro-organisms in India;

(e) whether new varities of plants, can be patented in the near future; and

(f) whether it is a fact that plant varieties patents will be protected by a body outside the jurisdiction of the present PATENT office?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No decision has been taken on this matter.

(b) Yes, Sir. Article 70 of the Agreement on TRIPS deals with pipeline protection. It requires Members to provide exclusive marketing rights for a period of 5 years to pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical products in respect of which they do not make available product patent protection as on the date of entry into force of the WTO Agreement. Exclusive marketing rights are to be provided subject to the conditions that such a product has obtained marketing approval in that Member or until a product patent is grantned or rejected in that Member, whichever period is shorter, provided that subsequent to the entry into force of the WTO Agreement, a patent application has been filed and a patent granted for that product in another Member and marketing approval obtained in such other Member.

(c) The TRIPS Agreement requires the term of protection to be at least 20 years. A transition period of 5 years is available to India for bringing its law into conformity with this provision.

(d) There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(e) There is no proposal to provide for patents in respect of plant varieties.

(f) Does not arise.

Export of Aluminium Metal and Semis

1786. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the high international price of aluminium has boosted the export of indigenous aluminimum and semis;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the country is facing acute shortage of aluminium for meeting the indigenous demand;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is a demand from various quarters for the ban on the export of aluminium and its products made out of indigenous metal so as to overcome the shortage; and

(d) if so, what steps Government are taking for imposing complete ban on the export of aluminiums and semis made out of indigenous production enabling the aluminium consuming units to keep their wheel moving?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The value of export of aluminium metal and semis during April—August, 1994 was Rs. 113 crores (Provisional). The exports during 1993-94 and 1992-93 were Rs. 255 crores and Rs. 383 crores respectively.

(b) Aluminium production in the country is not sufficient to meet the demand. The gap in the country's requirement is met through imports.

(c) and (d) Import of aluminium metal is freely allowed. Besides, Customs duty on aluminium has also been reduced to facilitate imports.

निर्यातों में वृद्धि करने के लिए लघु उद्योग क्षेत्र को सुविधाएं दिया जाना

1787. **श्री इकबाल सिंह :** क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार देश के निर्यातों में वृद्धि करने के लिए लघु उद्योग क्षेत्र को और सुविधाएं देने का विचार रखती है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ;

(घ) क्या सरकार ने गत तीन वर्षों के दौरान लघु उद्योग क्षेत्र द्वारा निर्यातों में वृद्धि करने के मामले में दिए गए योगदान की प्रतिशतता का कोई मूल्यांकन किया है; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो सरकार द्वारा लघु उद्योग क्षेत्र को संरक्षण देने और उसकी दशा में सुधार करने के लिए क्या कारगर कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं ?

वाणिज्य मंत्री (श्री प्रणव मुखर्जी): (क), (ख) और (ङ) संशोधित निर्यात आयात नीति 1992-97 में लघु उद्योग क्षेत्र से निर्यात किए जाने पर विशेष बल दिया गया है । निर्यात घराने/व्यापार घराने/चोटी के व्यापार घराने/सर्वोच्च चोटी के व्यापार घरानों का दर्जा देने के लिए लघु उद्योग, हथकरघा